

MUSIC OF THE WEEK

*There is no art without life,
There is no life without growth,
There is no growth without change,
There is no change without controversy.*—Frank Rutter.

IT has been a poor week for good music through the loudspeaker. Municipal elections and political speeches seem severely to have cut into time usually devoted to concert work.

So, at the risk of not quite justifying the title of my page this week, I would like to refer to a very considerable bulk of correspondence received from performers whose work has been mentioned. Such interest is particularly encouraging. This page, while I hope it may be read with some little interest by general listeners, aims chiefly to offer studied criticism, and perhaps some small degree of help, to performers. I am happy always to have their comments—even when, sometimes, they are not very complimentary! Critics are as fallible as performers—perhaps more so. . . . None realises that better than I do.

However, correspondents who take me to task for some candid opinion or other, might pay me the compliment of careful reading. I recently received from a listener a letter that took me to task for saying New Zealand had no Bach player. I didn't say anything of the sort. I said that, as yet, I had not heard one. I was recommended by the irate correspondent to listen to Miss



JOHANN BACH

. . . That ingenious musical mathematician.

Fama, and at the first opportunity I most certainly shall.

ON the same subject some of the finest Bach playing I have ever heard was by Paul Schramm when I heard him in Australia. What I liked about Schramm's Bach was that it was played with such ease. There was none of the stiffness in his playing that is so characteristic of concert platform performance of that ingenious mathematician of music. I enjoyed Schramm's performances so much that I was almost convinced that Bach was easy.

A Woolston correspondent seeks advice about the Malaskin song "O Could I But Express in Song." Last week I criticised a singer for not paying attention to the rhymical sense of the final page of this number. I can only reiterate my previous criticism. The singer did not observe the correct note valuation in most places where the vocal line differed rhythmically from the accompaniment.

This was noticeable particularly in the final page of the song.

I am very pleased the performer wrote about this song, and I believe that she honestly considers she presented the number with at least rhythmical accuracy. Still I cannot agree. Such mistakes can be made quite unconsciously. Unless an artist performs twos against threes with perfect concentration then the twos will easily become parts of the threes. A good

exercise for singers to avoid this is to sing a scale of two octaves while a pianist plays a scale in three octaves, both, of course, starting and finishing at the same time.

The danger really occurs in an attempt to "fit-in" the quavers with the triplets. This method should be abolished. Even recording artists fall into this trap at times.

To Mrs. M. H. L. Robinson, of the Royal Christchurch Musical Society, who published her complaint in the "Record" regarding my criticism of a recent performance, I can only say again that such criticisms as I offer are entirely without knowledge of the performers and without prejudice. I did not listen to the trio as by six minutes to nine I was tired of the Holst I had heard.

Last Sunday I heard Ernest Jenner again. He was at 3YA playing piano solos. The annotations were good and the playing splendid.

Two women 'cellists were broadcasting the same evening—Jean Clarkson, from Auckland, and Nancy Estall, from a southern station. Both players produced good tones, but Miss Estall sounded to me to have the more warmth in her performance. Her tone was rich and full, even if the actual items were trivial in the musical sense. Harp accompaniment set off the ensemble excellently. Being a bit old-fashioned I do not know of a more attractive "drawing-room setting" than two young ladies playing 'cello and harp!

Jean Clarkson played better music than her contemporary but both artists played well in time throughout—there was no glissando noticeable. There is nothing more objectionable in string playing than to listen to continual sliding from one move to another.

DURING the forthcoming Celebrity Symphony season, Australian talent will be given wide opportunity, announces the Australian Broadcasting Commission's Federal Controller of Music, Mr. W. G. James. He states that the Commission is following its policy of previous years in selecting a number of outstanding Australian artists to appear under the visiting international conductors, Georg Szell and Dr. Malcolm Sargent, while the visiting overseas celebrities will be presented with resident Australian conductors. By this means, Australian artists—conductors and soloists—will have the opportunity of gaining invaluable experience from association with world-famous musical personalities.

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